



1995-96 KIRIS OPEN-RESPONSE ITEM SCORING WORKSHEET

Grade 8 — Social Studies Question 2

The academic expectations addressed by this item are:

2.14 Students understand the democratic principles of justice, equality, responsibility, and freedom, and apply them to real-life situations.

2.15 Students can accurately describe various forms of government and analyze issues that relate to the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy.

The core content assessed by this item includes:

- In order for the U.S. government to function as a democracy, citizens must assume responsibility for its function (e.g., participating in civic groups, paying taxes, obeying the law, serving in the armed forces, and voting in elections).

2. Taking Part in Government

Sixty years after the Battle of Concord, Levi Preston was asked why he fought. “What we meant in going for those Redcoats was this,” he answered. “We always had governed ourselves, and we always meant to.”

After people like Levi Preston and others fought for Americans’ right to govern themselves, why don’t more citizens today participate in the process of government? Explain several reasons why you think many Americans fail to take an active role in civic affairs.

SCORING GUIDE

Score	Description
4	Student explains in detail several reasons why Americans fail to take an active role in civic affairs, using pertinent examples.
3	Student explains in detail one or two reasons why Americans fail to take an active role in civic affairs, using pertinent examples. OR Student explains several reasons in a general way.
2	Student explains one or two general reasons why Americans fail to take an active role in civic affairs; explanation is limited.
1	Student lists one or two reasons why Americans fail to take an active role in civic affairs; response is undeveloped and shows poor understanding of the question.
0	Response is incorrect or irrelevant.
Blank	Blank/no response.

Possible reasons for not participating in civic affairs:

- Lack of confidence in politicians/government
- Media attacks on politicians
- Lack of time
- Working multiple jobs
- Apathy toward issues
- Attitude of “one vote doesn’t count”
- Lack of confidence in knowledge of government



KIRIS ASSESSMENT ANNOTATED RESPONSE

GRADE 8 SOCIAL STUDIES

Sample 4-Point Response of Student Work

Student explains several reasons why many Americans do not take an active role in civic affairs.

Student response shows insight into conditions/situations that create an environment where citizens are more likely to be involved in government and civic affairs.

More citizens today should participate in the process of government. There are many reasons why they do not. For one, America today is not fighting against anyone to earn freedom or the right to govern ourselves. If we were in the middle of a war for freedom, more people would be enthusiastic about participating in government affairs. Also, our government today is very different from the government that we started at the beginning of our freedom. The cost of being in or participating in government is extremely high. Because of these high prices, people don't want to participate in civil affairs. Also, our government today is very complicated. The laws that were made at the start of our country may not pertain to our country at present times. This has caused much controversy in which people might not want to get in the middle of. Also the press covers many things that happen in government. If a person is afraid they might be exploited by the press, they might hesitate to participate in their government. There are many reasons why people do not participate in their government.

Student uses various and pertinent examples to defend his/her position.

Student organizes response effectively by restating the question; providing information and examples to support his/her argument; and including a summary statement.

Student response reveals an awareness that in order for the U.S. government to function as a democracy citizens must participate.



KIRIS ASSESSMENT ANNOTATED RESPONSE

GRADE 8 SOCIAL STUDIES

Sample 3-Point Response of Student Work

Student uses several reasons to answer the question.

Student's reasons are vague, general, and not developed.

Levi Preston is only one of the many people who fought for Americans' rights to govern themselves. But today few citizens participate in the process of the government. One reason I feel that citizens don't participate in the government is because it's complicated and if you don't understand something why participate in it. Other reasons are because it's time consuming and it takes a lot of knowledge. These are just a few reasons why I feel that citizens don't participate in the government.

Student's response is organized with an introduction, support information, and a summary statement.

Student response answers the question but does not make a connection between civic participation and a thriving democracy.



KIRIS ASSESSMENT ANNOTATED RESPONSE

GRADE 8 SOCIAL STUDIES

Sample 2-Point Response of Student Work

Student presents several general reasons why Americans fail to take an active role in civic affairs.

Student's responses include repetition and rephrasing of only two simple ideas.

Many Americans do not participate because simply they do not care for the government. Some people just don't participate because they do not like the way the government is run. They just go on with their life and let the government officials do all the work. Others believe that the government does not need their help. Other people might believe that the government is doing just fine with way it is.

Student's reasons/ideas are vague and not well-developed.

Sample 1-Point Response of Student Work

Student attempts to answer question, but the response shows little, if any, understanding of the question.

Student response indicates some knowledge of current-day concerns of citizens (i.e., partisan politics, taxes, work responsibilities), but does not make connections to the main idea of citizen participation.

People do not want to take an active role in civic affairs because they are to worried about if a republican or a Democrat is in office. They get all made About taxes when they know why the government needs the money. People these days get so wrapped up in work they don't want to go home to there families much less pay attention to the government.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

Taking Part in Government

Interview persons on election day (or before) who are voting. Compile reasons why they are voting and present to the class.

Develop a “One Vote Can Make a Difference” poster with information on elections where one vote was critical to the outcome.

Create an advertisement encouraging people to vote. Present the advertisement to an authentic audience like the League of Women Voters or the County Clerk.

Write letters to “pen pals” in other countries to get information on voting in other countries. Then, compile a “compare and contrast” with the voting situation in the U.S.

Interview several adults about their participation in the government process. Collect and share the results of the interview.